

Willis's 3-pt. mounted toolbar can be set up for planting, hilling and digging potatoes.



Do-It-All Potato Planter

If you plant too many potatoes to do it by hand, but not enough to invest in a line of planters, hillers and diggers, you'll like this "hiller with extras" from Willis Equipment.

"We specialize in meeting the needs of smaller growers who can't justify the big equipment," says Gary Willis. "This hillier system fits that niche. The same toolbar can be used for planting, hilling and digging potatoes."

The basic unit, which sells for \$800, comes equipped for hilling potatoes. The 3-pt. hitch mounted 4-ft. toolbar has two 32-in. vertical shafts with sweeps. Two U-bolts hold them in place, making it easy to preset for maximum depth and width. Sweeps on the shaft are available in multiple widths from 9 to 18 in. Extra or replacement sweeps run about \$40.

For another \$400, the same unit can be set up for planting. A planting kit consists of a planting tube, closing arms, seat, and box holder for seed potatoes.

With the tractor straddling the row, one shaft and sweep are moved to the center of the toolbar and the second is removed from the toolbar.

The planting tube is positioned to bottom out just behind the sweep. As the driver heads down the row, the rider drops potatoes down the tube.

Once the potatoes are in the ground and ready to be hilled, the unit is returned to the field with both sweeps in place to either side of the row. "Others have built similar multi-purpose planting and hilling units, but with only a single sweep," says Willis. "That simply isn't as effective for hilling."

At the end of the season, the same toolbar is returned to the field. Again a single shaft is positioned to the center, but with a special \$75 sweep.

"Our digging sweep has steel rods on it that stick out to either side," says Willis. "Simply set the depth below the potatoes and straddle the row. The rods allow dirt to fall through while potatoes are kicked out to the side."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Willis Equipment Sales, R.R. 1, 9516 Northville Road, Thedford, Ont., Canada N0M 2N0 (ph 519 243-2616; toll free 800 561-3025; info@willis.com; www.willis.com).

Rotating drum washer sets above 160-gal. recirculating water tank, handling up to 100 lbs. of root crops at a time.



Veggie Processing Equipment For Smaller Producers

Washing root crops or bunching spears of asparagus and other vegetables goes a lot faster with specialized equipment from Willis Equipment Sales. A drum washer handles up to 100 lbs. of root crops at a time, with 55 gpm of water flowing over the rotating drum. The washer can be used in batch or continuous flow fashion.

"It's the amount of water, not the pressure, that helps," says Gary Willis. "You don't want pressure, or it bruises or even cuts the vegetables. What you want is the rubbing action in the rotating drum with enough water to loosen, soften and wash the dirt away."

Willis's washer consists of a 26-in. dia., 3-ft. long, rotating drum powered by a 1/2-hp motor. The drum sits in a frame over a 160-gal. tank for the recirculating water. The 55-gpm sump pump is set about 10 in. above the floor of the tank inside a screen. Most dirt and other material settle out of the recirculating water, but the pump can handle debris of up to 1-in. dia. A 2-in. dia. pvc pipe drilled with exit holes releases the water across the top of the drum.

Once produce has been washed it's bagged or loaded into boxes and bags.

Bunching asparagus spears, broccoli and other veggies is made easy with Willis's semi-automatic buncher that offers hands-free stretching and release of rubber bands.

"Simply place the rubber band on the four fingers in the mouth of the table, and step on the foot pedal to stretch the fingers and the rubber band into a square opening," explains Willis. "Set the bunch in the opening, and release the foot pedal. When the fingers contract around the bunch, the rubber band is released from the fingers."

Both pieces of equipment are easy to operate and increase productivity. The buncher sells for \$350. The washer with motor and pump costs at \$3,250.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Willis



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Roeters Farm Equipment offers a variety of new and used equipment lines that are ideal for both entry level and experienced vegetable growers.

Where To Buy New Or Used Vegetable Farming Equipment

If you want to get into vegetable farming or expand existing acreage, a good place to start is Roeters Farm Equipment. The Michigan firm has become a nationwide supplier of quality new and used equipment for the trade and has begun selling internationally as well.

"We sell all across the U.S., and just yesterday I was working with a guy in Hungary who needed a sweet corn picker," says Mark Roeters, owner.

Go to Roeters' website, and you'll find every kind of used equipment from tillage to harvesters and in-field conveyers. Roeters also carries a variety of new equipment lines that are ideal for both entry level and experienced producers. A good example is the 12 MX Planter.

"It's ideal for the guy getting started without spending a lot of money," says Roeters. "You can get a one-row unit on a 3-pt. hitch for \$1,100 compared to \$3,000 a row for

an air planter. It won't do the job of an air planter, but it's ideal for guys who are sick of planting by hand."

The 12 MX is equipped with different seed plates for planting everything from small Indian corn to large pumpkin seeds. Seed spacing can be adjusted from one to 18-in. The all-mechanical design and rugged, steel construction make a durable and effective planter. Multiple units can easily be ganged on a toolbar, says Roeters.

For small seeded vegetables, Roeters recommends the Planet Junior, another low priced planter. Like the 12 MX, it's a mechanical unit virtually unchanged for nearly 60 years. It comes in single row or ganged systems. Single row models cost \$650.

"It will plant every kind of seed from turnips to soybeans," says Roeters. "With it and the 12 MX, a small grower has all of his crops covered."

Like the 12 MX, the Univerco Eco Weeder is available in one, two or multiple row units for 20 hp tractors and up. A single unit costs \$4,100, but allows a driver and operator to cultivate up to 10 acres a day. The weeder lets the operator guide spinning tines alongside or between plants, depending on the speed of travel and plant spacing.

"It has been one of my hottest selling items in recent years," says Roeters.

The Veg Vayer crop conveyor can quickly pay for itself in reduced labor. While a new one starts at around \$9,000, a good used one can be had for \$3,500. It mounts to a tractor to gather crops from sweet corn to melon, zucchini and pumpkins. Field workers drop produce on the belt, reducing handling and transport in the field. The belt carries the produce to a gooseneck elevator that lifts it up and into a trailing wagon or cart. Veg Vayer lengths range from 21 to 31 ft.

Other used equipment carried by Roeters

includes pull-type potato, onion and carrot harvesters. Transplanters vary from virtual antiques to the latest mulch planters and equipment to punch holes in laid plastic sheets.

A unique labor saver that Roeters makes and sells is the bag holder. Available as a single bag unit for \$350 or a three-bag rotator for \$1,100, the Bag Holder makes filling bags easy. Four spring loaded clips hold the bag in place while slowly lowering the bag to floor level as it fills, preventing bruising. The quick release clips work with poly, paper or mesh bags.

"With the three-bag rotator, one guy can attach bags, one fill and the third remove and tie," says Roeters. "It's completely adjustable and easy to move as needed."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roeters Farm Equipment, 565 E. 120th St., Grant, Mich. 49327 (ph 231 834-7888; sales@roetersfarmequipment.com).